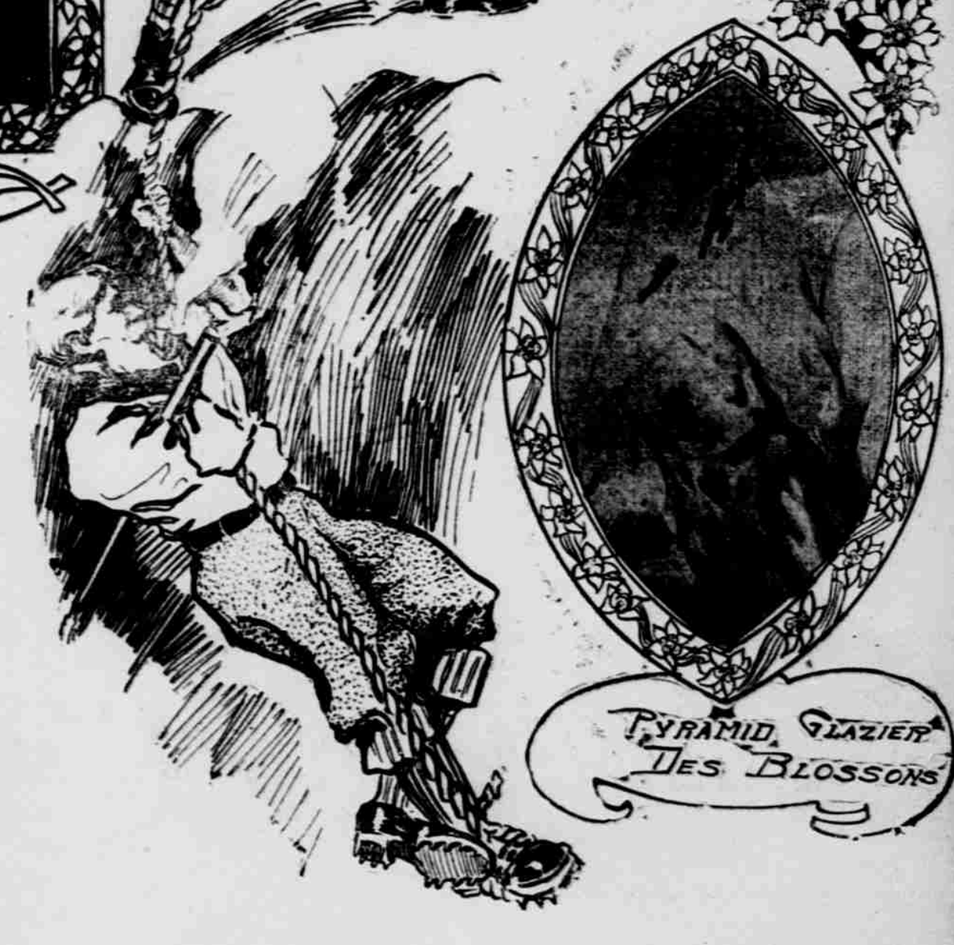
AMERICAN GIRL SAVED THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF MONT BLANC DISASTER.

VERÉ CAREWE Chanced to Be Climbing to the Grand Plateau, Mont Blanc, With a Party of Seven Persons When the News of the Disaster, of Which the Cable Dispatches Told, Reached Her. She at Once Headed a Rescuing Party and Had the Satisfaction of Pulling Out One Man Alive.

NEAR THE SUMMIT: MT. BLANC

D. WOMAN



PYRAMID, GLACIER DES BLOSSONS

Special Correspondence of The Sunday Republic.

Zurich, Switzerland, Aug. 20.—We left the mountain village of Kilchberg, near Zurich, on Friday morning to climb the Mont Blanc, there being eight in our party, among them three Americans, Doctor Alfred Smith, Mrs. Smith, and myself. The rest were Frenchmen and Germans whom we had met at the hotel.

On Saturday afternoon at 1, when we had reached a height of 10,000 feet, we met a number of Swiss on the way down, who told us quite casually that some twenty-four hours before they had passed Henri Mandult and Joseph Staelling, well-known Alps climbers, accompanied by a guide and carrier. The two gentlemen, they said, found an icy grave during the night, dying of the frost and cold, while their assistants were now trying to reach a place of safety.

Some of our party felt inclined to return immediately, but we Americans persuaded them to continue, if only to bring aid to the survivors of the disaster, who doubtless needed clothes, stimulants, if not physical or medical help. As for myself, I had a woman's feeling, that we were needed, that we must go on even if the weather conditions higher up were ever so discouraging.

FIRST TRACE OF THE DISASTER.

At the end of an hour more I happened to be in the lead of the party, when suddenly my eye was attracted by an ice pick and ax sticking out of the deep snow. Every experienced mountain climber knows what that means—no one loses this integral part of one's equipment last he has to. I beckoned to my friends to hurry their ascent, and upon their arrival we engaged in a systematic investigation, soon to discover a trail on the mountain side where a body seemed to have glided or rolled down. The evidence struck terror into our hearts, for the incline was steep and torn by a hundred gaps and crevices, "chimneys" leading into the interior of the mountain, as they say here. I suggested that we form into an exploring party, secured by ropes, and being the smallest of the lot I was sent ahead, the rope being secured around my waist and to hooks and eyes in the girdles of my fellows. Our guide, a Swiss of herculean build, brought up the rear, leaning on his iron-pointed "stock." If either of us threatened to fall, those coming after had to pull him or her up, while the guide held on for dear life, bracing himself against the rocks.

The incline we faced was a snow field between two mighty rocks, running apeak for several miles, it seemed. We were forced to take it at an unequal gait, for its steepness made us lose control of our limbs time and again. Investigation showed that the body, or whatever else glided down, had bounded over two broad crevices. At the other side of the third gap the gliding marks ceased abruptly. This "chimney," then, had proved a mausoleum.

BODY OF MAN LYING HEAD DOWNWARD.

We removed the ropes from our bodies and the carrier offered to dive into the black hole—for a consideration, of course, for "no money, no Swiss." When the men had lowered him about 165 feet he called out that he had found something. A minute later he shouted that it was the body of a man, lying head downward.

He worked over it for quite a while and then signaled that we must send down the guide, too, as he couldn't manage alone. The guide was then dispatched in the same manner, and these two men remained in the bowels of the mountain for over an hour—the body was stuck fast between the ridges and could be removed only inch by inch and by sacrificing part of the clothes. When finally it was brought to light our servants recognized it as that of a man of their own class, one of the most popular carriers of Mont Blanc district, only 23 years old, and leaving a wife and several children.

As this man had accompanied Messrs. Mandult and Staelling, our guide thought the body of the party's guide must be near. Consequently we took up the search anew, investigating all the crevices on the route one after another, but without result. While thus engaged a rescuing party, consisting of six guides, came up. They had been sent out by the authorities of Chamonix, and we left it to them to continue the search, while we proceeded upward to look for the frozen men and bring them aid, if such was still possible. We had no sooner reached the "Grand Plateau," now an ice wilderness, when we saw two bodies in the snow, one lying face downward, the other remaining in a sitting posture, arms extended and the gloved hands grasping pieces of ice. Doctor Smith made an investigation, and concluded that death had overtaken the two men more than sixteen hours, or probably still longer, ago. At the same time we noticed traces of footsteps, leading east from the bodies, which seemed to favor the idea that the missing guide might be in the neighborhood, dead or alive.

The search on the frozen snow beds and over ice-clad rocks was one of the most exhausting and perilous undertakings I ever engaged in. After an hour my hands and knees were bruised and bleeding in a dozen places from falls, and the clothes of all of us were in tatters. However, we finally discovered the spot where the footprints ceased—at the edge of a large crevice. While we were making preparations to send down the carrier, inarticulate cries rose from the bottom of the pit. You may imagine our surprise. The man searched for was alive then, or half alive.

"Are you alive down there?" cried our guide through a tube formed of his immense hands.

"Yes, indeed, you idiot," came back a cheery voice in Swiss-French patois. "You don't suppose my ghost was calling for help?"

"Will one man suffice to bring you up?"

The man below made some reference to the animal kingdom, prefacing the information that a rope would do. He "knew enough to fasten it 'round his belly."

POLITE UNFORTUNATE CALLED FOR LONGER ROPE.

We sent down our strongest emergency rope, seventy-five feet long, only to be rewarded by a flood of oaths. "If you haven't got a longer rope, go home and let me die in peace," thundered the polite unfortunate. We at once fastened a hundred foot rope to the first, but the signal "halt" came only when the end was pretty nearly reached.

Five minutes later there was a cry "en haut" (pull up). We pulled and pulled. It was hard work, not only for the women, but for the men, too.

As the body neared the surface, bluish smoke arose above it. While hoisted from the living grave this hardy mountaineer was smoking a pipe. His first words were: "Tobacco and a kirch" (a strong liquor), "but don't be all day about it."

We bedded him on blankets, administered the desired stimulants and prepared to light a fire by his side.

"I am not hurt," he said, "only my hands and feet don't seem right." Lucky fellow; he didn't feel his terrible injuries. His head and face were a mass of bruises, four of his fingers had dropped off, amputated by Jack Frost, and his feet were in a terrible condition; Doctor Smith fears he will lose them. After warming up a bit and partaking of some meat, heated over the fire, he asked for his friend, the carrier, and tears rolled down his face when he heard that he was dead. As to the others—he knew.

STORY OF THE ACCIDENTS TOLD BY GUIDE.

Here is the intrepid man's story of the disaster. I took it down in shorthand:

"We left 'Les Grand Mulets' at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, heading for 'Cabane Ballot,' where our masters desired to reach before night. But at 5 o'clock a terrible storm broke out. The wind was so powerful that we were in danger of being blown down the mountain side, and I advised to dig a hole in the snow and remain under shelter until the worst was over.

"But our employers wouldn't hear of it, neither would they consent to turn back. Mr. Handult especially was very emphatic in his refusal. He thought, apparently, that my warnings were due to cowardice. Then, of course, I decided to show him the stuff I was made of. I took the lead again and walked ahead in the face of the raging storm, accompanied by fog so dense that I couldn't see the Alpenstock I had in my hand.

"Pretty soon it became evident that we had lost our way. While we thought we were marching towards Cabane Ballot, we were making for the Grand Plateau, as I now see. Finally, even M. Handult got enough, and announced that he was willing to seek a refuge. But by that time we were already too feeble to dig a hole, and the rest of our strength went out in futile attempts to bury at least our lower limbs. One after another each sank down, moaning piteously, and the rest of the night was thus spent on a bed of ice, 12,300 feet above the level of the sea.

"Towards 4 in the morning I noticed that the heavens were clearing, the wind somewhat subsided, while the cold increased in intensity. For those reasons I demanded that we proceed without delay. After making a rope-train, we set out, and at first both our employers remarked that under the circumstances walking was doing them the world of good, as it made the blood circulate in one's veins and dissipated the awful feeling of numbness from which we had suffered so many hours.

"I walked ahead, the Frenchman right behind me, and we had not made more than 100 paces when I felt myself drawn backwards by the rope. I turned and helped M. Mandult to his feet, encouraging him as best I knew how and reminding him that the trouble was of his own making, as he had timely warning. He promised to do his utmost, but after ten more paces cried 'halt.'

"I can't go a step further," he moaned with a breaking voice. "I believe I am dying. Come, Blanc, give me your hand and tell me that I am forgiven. I see now to what a sorry predicament my obstinacy led. Forgive me, friends, all of you." As I kneeled by his side, the poor man embraced me, kissed me, and never let go. He was dead when we lifted his arms gently upon my shoulders.

STAELING EXPIRED AS HE SANK DOWN.

"At this moment I sounded my repeating watch; it was just four. When Mr. Staeling saw what had happened, he began to roll his eyes; next he was seized by a laughing fit, then he cried and raved. The carrier and myself tried in vain to quiet him; when we persisted he attacked us, tearing our beards and clutching at our bodies. But the paroxism soon passed off, his strength being exhausted and he allowed himself to be led away.

"He made some ten or fifteen steps forward, stumbled, swayed from one side to the other and fell in his tracks, expiring as he sank down. We carried him to the spot where his friend was and worked over him for two hours; it was of no use. Finally, we decided to leave the bodies, go home and report to the authorities what had happened. As we rose to go, we found that we hadn't the strength to gird ourselves with the rope. We must have stumbled about the glacier-labyrinth for an hour or more, probably walking in a circle like horses suffering from blind staggers. At 7 o'clock, just after I had sounded my watch, I felt the ground give way under me. I fell and fell, and still I fell. I thought I was falling to the center of the earth. After I reached the lowest depths, I heard the carrier call me by name. I had just strength enough to reply: 'I am all right; nothing broken; get thee to the Grand Mulets and fetch help.'

"On the way there my poor friend met death. * * *

"I asked Blanc about his sensations during the fall. This is his extraordinary statement:

"I reckon that my descent into the mountain lasted five or six seconds, but it would take me two hours to describe the thoughts and feelings I underwent during this short space of time. And all my thoughts, notions and ideas were thoroughly consistent and coherent, not mixed up and jumbled up as in dreams. First, I saw the possibility of my fate. I calculated to myself: Ten to one I will be a dead man upon my arrival at the bottom. If, however, I find myself alive and conscious, I will have to take some of the vinegar-ether which, on leaving home, I placed in my vest pocket. A good thing, I mused to myself, that it is where it is. I would be unable to reach for it if it was still in my knapsack, where I used to carry it.

SOME THOUGHTS WHICH FILLED HIS BRAIN.

"I will take two or three drops of the ether on my tongue, I continued in my thoughts. That will revive me and keep me from taking cold. But what about my stick? Ah, that may be useful if I live, and besides it is a beautiful alpenstock. I will keep it. And, true enough I held on to it. Then I thought that it might be well to take off and throw away my spectacles, as they might break and injure my eyes. I reached for them, but was unable to do as intended.

"Thus, I spent several, or may be, only one precious second in egotistical circumspection. After that my thoughts turned upon the consequences which my death would have for my family. I must try to save myself for the sake of my wife and children, I argued. The friend that was with me was probably lamed by terror, and I must double his energies by calling for help, if I can. A good way to spur him, I thought, would be to cry out, 'I am all safe, but must have a drink at once.' Then when the news of my death reached home, I imagined what would happen. I heard my wife and children cry and lament and tried to console with them. I even cracked jokes in this endeavor.

"That brought back to me all my struggles, my trials, and small triumphs. My life from childhood on glided past my mental observation like a living picture, vivid, impressive, joyful and sorrowful as it had been. Tableau followed tableau in quick succession, each figure being distinct, incidents perfectly and the several completely pictured. When I had arrived at my present state and conditions, I saw a magnificent blue heaven opening to receive me. All was serene happiness, while rosy and violet clouds marked the horizon. Into this heaven I floated with perfect equipoise, with beautiful anticipation, while my eyes perceived my body flying through the air and saw the snow field below. I heard a dull thud; I had struck."

VERE CAREWE.

WHERE DEATH IS THE CLIMBER'S PINNACLE.

ALPINE SACRIFICES TO PURPOSELESS AMBITION.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

In their assaults upon the higher slopes of the Alps a great army of tourists suffer each year a larger percentage of losses than have troops in many famous battles. During the present season the death roll of the Alps has grown to an appalling length. Among its victims are included men prominent in science and in society. Volunteers for this hazardous undertaking have never, however, been more numerous or more enthusiastic.

Judged merely by actual statistics, Alpine climbing is too evidently as an exercise the most perilous pursued in the name of pleasure. The deaths met by Alpine adventurers are, besides, likely to be sudden and violent. They must face the possibility of being dashed down hundreds, even thousands, of feet into some crevass, of being overwhelmed by avalaches, or even being lost in these wild regions, to die a miserable death, from starvation. Searchers for the Pole face fewer and less terrifying dangers.

The loss of mountain climbers has become familiar in all the great summer resorts of the Alps. It has become so common in many places that the news merely casts a passing shadow upon the gaiety of the vicinity. The news is first hearided by the appearance of a group of black dots moving fearfully down the mountain sides. To the inexperienced eye the group means nothing, but the guides are quick to detect evidence of an accident.

The news spreads quickly, until every glass in the place is focussed upon the faint, wavering line traversing the pass. Often the anxious crowd must wait hours before the news can be learned. Then a sad little procession, bearing the dead, finally arrives, and the death roll of the Alps is found to have been increased. A few days later one or more tombs have been added to the bare little graveyard on the mountain side, and the next day a crowd of tourists, larger and more enthusiastic than the last, will probably start out merrily to face the same danger.

The fatalities of last season were twice as many as those of the year before. The present season promises to establish still another record. The statistics will speak for themselves. They may be accepted as entirely reliable, since they emanate from the Alpine Club, which is not likely to exaggerate, to say the least, the dangers of this exercise. Incidentally, the club publishes at the end of every season a bulletin of the deaths reported in the Alps, with the names and full particulars, dwelling particularly upon the dangers to be avoided in the future.

During the season of 1901 there were 119 deaths reported in the Swiss Alps alone due to mountain climbing accidents. This was nearly double the number in the same region for the previous season. It is impossible to tell how many persons were engaged in climbing the higher peaks, but the number is, of course, comparatively small—not more than a few thousands at most. In many decisive battles in the Boer war, where tens of thousands were engaged, the actual loss was somewhat less. It is estimated that several times last year's number of tourists are now engaged in searching the same peaks and facing the same dangers.

The greatest number of fatalities are reported from Chamouni and the general region thereabout. The Materhorn claimed several, but its dangers appear to be decreasing. Since it was first conquered and its summit was reached, some sixty-five years ago, the famous mountain has lured several hundreds to their death. Zermatt and the Upper Rhein Valley have also added their quota, but the region atracts comparatively few tourists, Mont Blanc has been rendered comparatively safe by the building of the railway, and the deaths upon its slopes are now fewer in number.

The most appalling record for any single section was that of the Swiss Alps during the season of 1886. According to the statistics of the Alpine Club, eight peaks were ascended during the year, and in these expeditions a total of eleven lives was lost. This refers, of course, only to the highest and least accessible mountain tops. The record was therefore about three deaths for every two peaks ascended. The dangers of North Pole exploration seem trifling by comparison.

The increase of the death roll of late years has been assisted by the so-called American invasion, which has extended as far as the Alps. The American tourist has penetrated to the furthest recesses of Switzerland. As might be expected, he takes a prominent part in climbing the Alps, as in most other enterprises. Many astonishing feats of climbing have been accomplished by Americans, and, as is inevitable, several deaths from this number have been added to the long list of mountain fatalities.

Every year Switzerland is becoming more and more the holiday ground of Europe, and incidentally of America as well, and the indications point to an increase in the number of fatalities in the future.

While the greatest number of fatalities occur each season in the Swiss Alps, the Savoy Alps rank next in the order of danger and the number of fatalities. Statistics show that the Italian Alps are in the third place in this estimate.

The grim Alps are no respecters of persons. The grewsome records contain the names of men of all classes from peasants to noblemen. Many of the most expert guides, whose skill has made them famous in their calling, annually meet death in the same way. During the last ten years the records show that for every 100 men killed in the Alps eight have been professional guides. A number of women are also included in the list of fatalities. In every 100 on the death list an average of three women will be found.

The most recent addition to the long roll of deaths in the Alps occurred but two weeks ago. The victim, M. Emile Dunant, was the curator of the Archaeological Museum in Geneva, and a man of world-wide reputation in scientific circles. While ascending Mont Pleureur he slipped and fell a considerable distance into a crevass. His skull was broken by the fall.

Dunant was not accompanied by a guide. A volume would be required to enumerate all those deaths and the horrors attending them. Deaths such as that of M. Dunant, who traveled alone, are comparatively rare.

In most cases the Alpine climber plunges to his death in full sight of his companions, often dragging one or more down with him. Whenever possible, the party recovers the body and returns with it to the starting place. Only last year one climber plunged into a crevass 1,200 feet deep, while his companions could only stand and helplessly watch the frightful descent and await the sound of the impact, far below them.

Still more awful has been the fate of those who have been lost on the mountain and have wandered aimlessly about in the intense cold until death overtook them. There have been several cases of men being taken ill near the summits of the mountains and abandoned by their companions, who were obliged to retreat alone in order to save themselves.

The greatest number of deaths among climbers has been caused each year by slipping. The bulletins issued by the Alpine Club would indicate that fully three-fourths of all the fatalities are due to this. The climbers are constantly being reminded of the necessity of wearing proper shoes. In many cases, of course, this is the result of carelessness. The men wear shoes improperly supplied with cleats, or they wander outside of the path.

So imminent is the peril in many places that a moment's cessation of vigilance may cause a man to lose his hold upon the ping is especially dreaded, since a man who smooth ice and go sliding to his death. Slipslips is very likely to drag one or more of his companions with him in his fall.

The next greatest danger, according to the records, is of death from avalanches. All the experience and skill of the oldest mountain guides is not sufficient to avoid this danger. The onslaught of the great masses of snow and ice is so sudden that often there is not time to escape, and the party is overwhelmed in an instant. The high altitudes of the mountains, again, often exert a fatal effect upon weak hearts.

HOW A WOMAN SHOULD THANK A MAN: BY ONE WHO HAS DONE SO.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

"Please don't!" The man's voice was pained with embarrassment.

"Oh, but it was so kind of you!" insisted the woman. He shuffled his feet and grew redder.

"It was nothing at all," he stammered.

"But it was such a big nothing to me, I assure you, and I hope you understand how very much I do appreciate your goodness," she persisted, in italics and small capitals, till the poor man began to wish he had never thought a kindness in his life, much less done one.

And all because he had hunted up a name in the directory for the over-appreciative little woman.

"Isn't it queer how men do hate to be thanked?" queried a girl, who, with her chum, had been an amused listener to the dialogue while they sipped their ice cream soda. "See, that poor man is actually wiping the sweat of agony from his forehead just because he was thanked to death."

"And even when he has really done a great favor for a woman, at expense of time, trouble and money, he still hates to be thanked for it."

"Especially when the woman makes his life a burden by her effusiveness; so few women know how to thank a man nicely, anyway," reflected the other girl.

"Yes, I have noticed that one little phase and the right kind of glance to go with it are quite enough to reward a man for such things."

"Particularly the glance," smiled her friend teasingly. "You are certainly a mistress of the gentle art of eye telegraphy, vulgarly known as 'go-geeism,' my dear Nell."

Nell's expressive orbs twinkled.

"But what is the use of employing a stupid servant like human speech when you have a much subtler, more intelligent and accurate one, the language of the human eye? It conveys in shorthand a whole volume of emotions—and gratitude is an emotion that loses its best value when translated by the tongue."

"But if you don't say anything at all the benefactor is likely to misunderstand."

"Oh, of course, you must say a little, a very little, however—and the man will be so much more comfortable than if you overwhelmed him with a deluge of vociferous and valuable gratitude. And then, too, you can make your eye message so sweet and grateful, and yet leave just a little meaning ambiguous enough to be interpreted in several ways. It gives him enough pleasure to try for the rest of the day to unravel the hidden meaning with its touch of flattery to be a reward in itself."

"That is all very well for a pretty girl like you—men are quite likely to think a glance of any kind from eyes like yours a 'reward in itself,' " sighed the other girl. "But they need more currency in proportion as its value decreases from plainer women. It takes ten words or looks of sweetness from a homely girl to make one of yours in paying power."

"Nonsense!" retorted Nell brusquely—she had a lot of sense for a pretty girl—"a man appreciates a pleasant look from any woman, if it is intended to convey a pleasant thought. It isn't the messenger he is looking at so much as the message. Men look deeper than you think."

"Nevertheless," said the plain girl plaintively, "I am still convinced that there are plenty of men who like better to receive a sweet message from a pretty servant than from an ugly tramp."

And she put down her empty glass with the decisive thump of one who knew from sad experience whereof she spoke.

EPIGRAMS IN DIALOGUE.

The following "bouquet" is picked from various plays, successful and otherwise:

Nothing can work such havoc as a fool.—"Sowing the Wind."

We may scale a mountain only to trip over a mole-hill.—"Queen's Favorite."

Those who wait for other men's shoes must tread roughly sometimes.—"Alone."

Wrinkles, you know, my dear, are the diary of a woman's life in cipher.—"His Excellency the Governor."

Life's like baccarat. Chance gives the cards; we only play what's dealt us.—"John Dunford, M. P."

Joy, joy; one cannot touch joy every day; one must take things as they are.—"Pelleas and Melicande."

In a woman's word book "I hate you" often means "I like you." That's worth remembering.—"The Termagant."

I suppose honesty's like the gout; it runs in certain families for several generations and then it skips a generation.—"The Rogue's Comedy."

Ladies' like bills of exchange, are allowed a little grace. And, unlike bills of exchange, are much pleasanter to meet.—"Her Own Rival."

Oh, isn't there one perfect world out of all the millions—just one—where everything goes right and fiddles never get out of tune?—"The Masqueraders."

China's National Anthem.

Much amusement was caused at Brussels recently during the official reception of the Chinese Prince Imperial. All day long the young Oriental was over the city, visiting buildings, monuments, museums, dining and reviewing, and everywhere he went he was struck by the same monotonous tune wearily intoned by military bands. After a while it jarred so terribly on his nerves that he asked his interpreter to inquire what the blessed thing was. "The Chinese National Anthem," was the reply of the somewhat surprised Burgomaster of Brussels, Mr. De Mot. "But we have none," was the response of the royal guest, to the embarrassment of the entourage, "and this tune was certainly never heard in the land of the Celestials." "Murder will out," and it seems that a wily European some years ago composed a sort of tumtum, with an accompaniment, and called it the "Chinese National Anthem," and sold the right to perform the same on all occasions when any Chinese dignitaries were being entertained. He has already made a nice little sum out of it.

Going Her One Better.

Cora: "The idea! Jack couldn't get me if he wanted me."

Lena: "He couldn't get me even if he didn't want me."—Smart Set.

What is it about widows that is so attractive? Man is a nervous animal—creature of precedent—and a first husband is a precedent.—"The Late Mr. Castello."

Marriage is like Exeter Hall; you can all take your places for nothing, and if you pay attention you may learn a good deal that is good for you. Marriage like Exeter Hall! There's the difference—rather an important difference; You can get out of Exeter Hall.—"Leonie."